Regulatory Authority for privatisation of airports

4044. SHRI N. K. PREMACHANDRAN :

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to set-up a Regulatory Authority in connection with the privatisation of Metro International Airports;

(b) whether Government also propose to allow the private sector to invest in the upgradation of International Airports, if so, the details thereof and the stage at which the matter of private participation stands at present; and

(c) whether Government would consider to relax the Air Charters Policy?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Government of India, in January 2000, approved the restructuring of the airports of Airports Authority of India (AAI) through long term leasing route as and when found suitable. At the first instance, the international airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata were taken up for this exercise. Accordingly in November 2000 Airports Authority of India (Amendment) Bill 2000 was introduced in the Parliament to provide for an enabling provision in the Act for leasing out the airports of AAI. The Bill was referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture. The Committee Submitted its report in November 2002 suggesting a number of Amendments in the Bill. Thereafter, steps have been taken to introduce a comprehensive amendment Bill in the Parliament. Meanwhile, Hon'ble Finance Minister has announced in his Budget for 2003-2004 that in addition to the existing initiative for leasing of major airports, Delhi and Mumbai airports will be taken up, as the Principal hubs of international travel to India, for modernisation to international standards. Two separate companies will be formed with initial equal equity participation from the Airports Authority of India. These two companies could also take joint venture private partners.

(c) The Government reviewed the conditions for operation of tourist charter flights to India and liberalised conditions for operation of tourist charter have been issued in January 2003.

Air service between Delhi and Ludhiana

4045. SHRI SUKHBIR SINGH : Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal with Government to restart air service between Delhi and Ludhiana;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any survey has been conducted in this regard, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Recently Indian Airlines has conducted a survey which reveals that the estimated passengers on the Ludhiana-Delhi route is around 20 passengers, per day, each way.

The airfield at Ludhiana is suitable for operation with smaller type of aircraft. Due to constraint of smaller aircraft in Indian Airlines, fleet it is not in a position to provide air transport services between Delhi and Ludhiana.

Accident involving IC 724 of IA

4046. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that recently the Indian Airlines flight IC-724 with 144 passengers on board, from Kolkata to Bangkok crashed on to the tramac during take off as, reportedly, the right rear wheel of the aircraft slipped through an ants-ridden and weakened surface of the runway;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the results of any inquiry conducted into the incident; and

(c) the steps taken for proper upkeep and maintenance of the runway and other infrastructural facilities at the Kolkata airport?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK) (a) and (b) No, Sir. An Indian Airlines A-320 aircraft VT-ESB operating flight IC-727 Kolkata to Yangon was involved in an incident. While taxing out of Kolkata airport, main right wheels of the aircraft got bogged into the taxiway surface. Investigation has revealed that the damaged area of taxiway was repaired earlier and its strength, including compactness of the bitumen surface, had regraded.

(c) In the Ninth Plan period, Airports Authority of India (AAI) has completed various, project at Kolkata airport like resurfacing of taxi track, construction of new apron for remote bays, construction of security hold for third aerobridge,